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ble, in every bedroom : 1. Light ; 2. A real fireplace ; 3. A closet. And these are all easily possible, even in the insufficient planning of our city houses. As for the bed itself, I wish we might see the end of the over-ornamented specimens, with lofty backpieces, covered with obtrusive mouldings, all stuck on, with make-believe panels, and with spikes, knobs, scroll-sawed work and other accessories, not merely useless but hurtful, because they collect and hold dust, and harbor uninvited guests. The bed ought to be as plain as possible even when handsomest and most costly. There ought not to be an inch of applied ornament to be found upon it ; whatever ornament there may be, in the way of carving, ought to be cut in the solid, and it should present as few opportunities as possible for anything that has no business there, to hide itself. The ends ought to be rounded, the sides should be low, and the headboard only so high as to give ample support to the pillows, and to show a few inches above them.

Whatever may be preferred for covering the floors of the other rooms in the house, it must be recommended that the floors of the bedrooms should not be carpeted. The floors ought to be of hard wood, and good rugs laid down at the side of the bed and in front of the wash-stand, dressing-table and bureau—wherever, in short, the warmth and softness of a carpet are desirable. Of course, if, as is best, the bed is so placed as to be accessible on both sides and at the foot, there will not be space for a large rug in our ordinary rooms—for, of course, the bed ought not to stand upon a rug. And besides, even if there were room, several small rugs would be preferable to one large one, for convenience of dusting and shaking.

Whatever, too, may be the fashion in the drawing-room of to-day, it cannot be doubted that a wainscot is best in the bedroom. A servant may be tamed down to some perfunctory gentleness and consideration when she is set to "rid up" a parlor or a dining-room, but all the untamed wildness of her nature comes out when she is let loose in the bedroom, and, unless the lower part of the wall is protected in some way, the painted plaster or the wall-paper will show signs before many days of the banging it has been subjected to by the bedstead and the chairs. Matting makes a pretty and serviceable covering for the space between the indispensable chair-rail and the baseboard, but many object to it on sentimental grounds. An excellent material is burlaps, which comes in a great variety of colors, is close in texture, and so thick that it will not "pull," and when well put up lies very close and smooth upon the wall. It is, however, rather a serviceable than an elegant material.

As for the covering of the wall proper in the bedroom, we are unwilling to recommend paper, and there is nothing to take its place but oil-paint or distemper—and distemper we much prefer, if only the painter can secure the right color—a thing much more difficult with this material than with oil. As for the tone of the walls, that ought to be subdued, because it is easier to get to sleep in a room whose walls do not reflect the light—and, what with the light in the street and the light in other people's houses, it is difficult to make a bedroom reasonably dark in our cities without the aid of curtains and shutters. And yet we must beware of getting the room too dark, for we have many days in our winter when we need all the light we can muster to dress by.

Last comes the fireplace, and here I must say that nothing is more cheerful than a fire to dress by, in our cheerless winters. And in these days of soft coal, such a fire is within everybody's reach, even if wood is not to be thought of.

No doubt, these suggestions for the bedroom may savor to some of asceticism, and I may be told that my room is "bare." I fear it sounds so, but surely it need not look so. I do indeed think that window

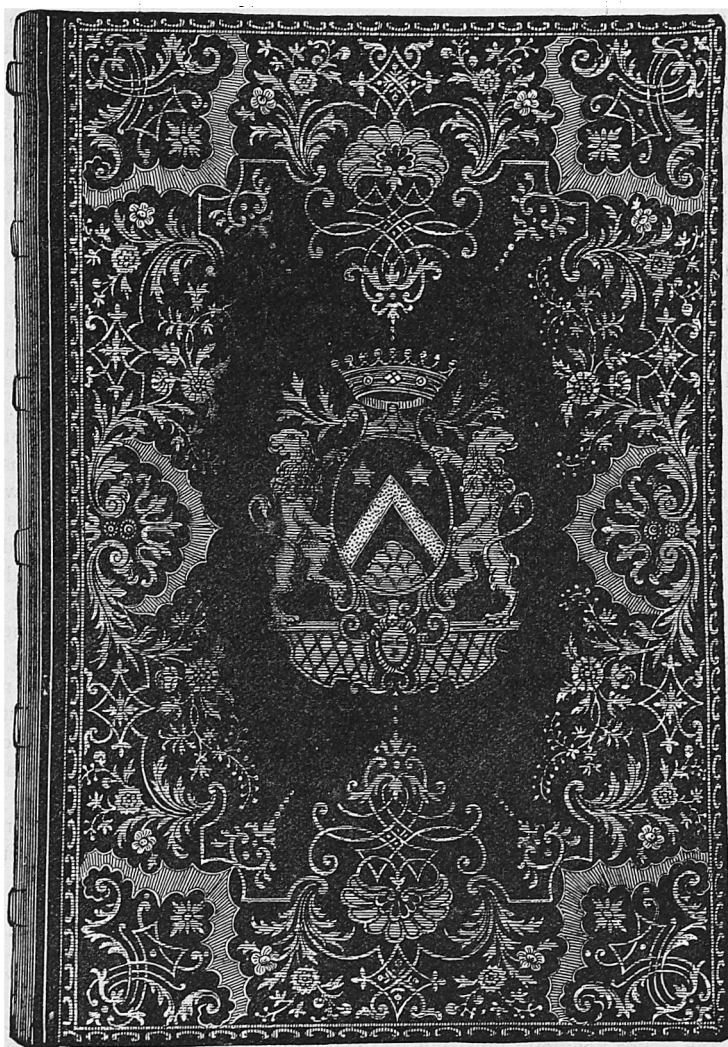
curtains, bed curtains, tapestries, wall-papers, or wall stuffs, ought to be avoided. But, with handsomely designed furniture, the bedstead, wash-stand, bureau, dressing-table, psyche-glass, wardrobe and a mixture of chairs, arm-chairs, and those of a lighter sort, with a comfortable sofa drawn up at the side of the fire, with handsome rugs, a laughing blaze, and in the morning a stream of sunshine on a wintry day—all these elements ought to make up an agreeable bedroom.

CLARENCE COOK.

ARTISTIC BOOKBINDING.

II.

THE decoration of book-covers has varied in style according to the various influences that have dominated public taste. Before the end of the fifteenth century the printing-presses had turned out some thirteen thousand editions, including all the masterpieces of Latin literature, several of those of Greek



FRENCH BINDING OF THE MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

WITH THE ARMS OF GASPARD MOÏSE DE FONTANIEU, "MÉLANGES DE POÉSIE, DE LITTÉRATURE ET D'HISTOIRE, BY THE MONTAUBAN ACADEMY."

literature, and various editions of the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante. There was, therefore, plenty of work for the binders. But where and who were the binders? Evidently the monks were the only men who had any knowledge or experience in the matter. And so we find that the monks were the first binders and the books first bound were those first printed—namely, religious books. These monastic bindings, as they are styled, differ little from the bindings of the huge missals and manuscripts. The sheets are sewn on bands varying in number from three to eight, and made of thongs of pig-skin, the ends of which are attached to the thick bevelled wooden side-boards. These boards are covered with pig-skin, vellum, parchment, and finally with calf-skin. Sometimes the volumes have metal clasps, but generally only thongs of leather, or more often ribbons. On the bands a blind thread pattern is traced, and between the bands, at the end of the fifteenth century, a Gothic rose or finial is often found stamped without gilding. This Gothic rose is also found on the side covers, sometimes to imitate the nail-heads of the old

Middle Age bindings, and sometimes distributed all over the cover "en semis." When once the stamping-die of the saddlers and leather-workers was applied to binding rapid progress was made in decoration. Dies, blocks and finely engraved rollers were made with designs borrowed from the Gothic style, from the stone-work of cathedrals, from wood-carving, from the ornamentation of manuscripts, and even from the early wood-cuts that adorned the text of the volume itself. These dies were at first made of iron and not of brass, as they now are : hence the French terms of "fers" and "petits fers." The Germans, who brought this monastic or incunabular binding to perfection just when it was beginning to be abandoned in France, borrowed their designs from no meaner artists than Albert Dürer, Sebald Behan and Hans Holbein. The fine French monastic bindings were executed in the reign of Louis XII. and in the beginning of that of Francis I. ; they belong in design to the floriated and flamboyant style illustrated so splendidly in the architecture of the Church of St. Maclon at Rouen, and in the château of Amboise. These bindings are, as it were, a reduction to the proportions of jewelry of the delicious work of the stone-cutters of the fifteenth century. The monastic bindings are entirely without gold, the art of gilding on leather having not yet been introduced into France or Germany.

Italy, and particularly Venice, was the cradle of the modern artistic binding. The Italians were the first to abandon wooden side-covers and coarse leathers like pig-skin. They executed their best bindings in calf and morocco, and abandoned once for all those clasps, corners, and other metallic strengthenings which became inappropriate and inartistic the moment the size and weight of the modern printed books rendered them useless. But, though the new style of bookbinding came from Italy, it is perhaps hardly exact to attribute it wholly to the Italians. Venice being in close commercial relations with the peoples of the Levant, had attracted quantities of Greek and Arab workmen, and the binders employed by the Aldi, who had added a binding department to their printing establishment in the very beginning of the sixteenth century, were without doubt Greeks and Arabs who, like so many other artists and workmen, had come to Italy after the fall of Constantinople. In support of this statement may be mentioned a "notice to the binder" written in Greek, inserted in the second volume of the Aldine Aristotle and the first volume of the Aldine Attic orators. Greek characters too are constantly found on the Italian bindings of the sixteenth century, and M. Didot suggests that the use of sawcuts to receive the bands of a binding, a process called in French "brocher à la grecque," was a

Byzantine process introduced by the Greek workmen employed by the Aldi. However, these Greeks and Arabs brought with them their own styles of decoration, and many objects of art of that period, especially glassware, an industry in which the Venetians excelled, are covered with motives whose geometrical construction betrays their Arabian origin. These decorative motives are in fact simply the reduction of the designs of the ceramic facings of celebrated mosques. These ornaments were adopted almost without change by the Aldi, and may be found in all the volumes issued from their presses, either as typographic accessories or as an exterior decoration. There are numberless instances where you can trace a design back from a French bookbinder, for example, to an Italian leather gilder and back through a pattern book to a piece of Venetian embroidery, and finally to a ceramic motive on some mosque at Constantinople or Cordova. The purest motives of decoration found on the French and Italian bindings of the time of Francis I. are unmistakably Arab.

THEODORE CHILD.